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Islamic Legal Studies Program
Harvard Law School

Civil Society in the Arab World
The Historical and Political Dimensions

by

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Occasional Publications 3
October 2002

ISBN 0-88086-050-2

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Preface

The following article, by our alumnus and esteemed long-time friend of the Islamic Legal Studies Program, Prof. Nawwaf Salam of Lebanon, was prepared as a presentation for a panel on Civil Society in Arab Countries at the Second Harvard Law School International Alumni Congress in Paris, held in June 2001. It provides an essential overview of its subject, offering us in short compass both an invaluable stock-taking of the general state of Arab civil society and of scholarship about it as well as many discerning suggestions as to where we should look for the events, scholars, or developments that are most indicative of the future of the field.

We are very pleased to be able to publish it as the third booklet in our Occasional Publications series.

Frank E. Vogel
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Civil Society in the Arab World
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Nawaf A. Salam[1]

Introduction

The concept of "civil society" seemed to have fallen out of fashion and its destiny to be confined to intellectual history until it was re-introduced into the political arena by the Solidarity movement in its struggle against the totalitarian Polish regime.[2] With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent demise of communism, civil society became a rallying cry for many activists opposed to military dictatorships or to other forms of authoritarian government. It succeeded in inspiring, in addition to activists, a number of eminent scholars and observers.[3] Moreover, it has rapidly and easily traveled to Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.[4]

The revival of interest in civil society was not enough, however, to overcome the fact that the notion has remained ill defined and nebulous to the extent that,

as Salvador Giner noted, "a number of authors have raised serious doubts about the significance of the very term 'Civil Society.' Some of them believe that it is only a catch-all concept, a notion that has cast its net too widely, at best vaguely referring to the world outside the institutions of government and the State, at worst thoroughly empty. Others, however, claim that the expression, vague and polysemic though it may often be, is a useful one."[5] Commenting also on the definitional imprecision of civil society, Foley and Edwards observed that "at times the concept seems to take on the property of a gas, expanding or contracting to fit the analytic space afforded it by each historical or sociopolitical setting."[6]

As a matter of fact, there is no one "classical" definition of civil society in the history of ideas.[7] Hegel's conception of it diverged from Locke's, and interpretations by Gramsci and Habermas as to what civil society is not only departed from earlier versions, but differed from each other as well.[8] Likewise, there is no consensus among contemporary scholars on what constitutes civil society, what it precisely is and is not, and what elements it does include or should exclude. However, the great majority of these scholars seem to agree on what the chief characteristics of civil society are. These

are described by Larry Diamond:

> The realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from "society" in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state and hold state officials accountable. "Civil Society" is an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state.[9]

At the organizational level civil society thus includes a large array of formal and informal groups such as associations, syndicates, federations, clubs, unions, guilds, and social movements that cover a wide range of different types of activities, whether civic, economic, cultural, educational, etc. But the notion of civil society also has a value dimension since it refers to the idea of civility, which implies pluralism and tolerance.

As to civil society's relation to the state, it is important to note here that although it acts as a counterweight to state power, it also needs the state's legal protection to insure the autonomy and freedom of action of its members. Furthermore, because it also helps articulate and advance various societal interests vis-à-vis the

government, the importance of civil society does not only lie in its ability to restrict state power.

The received wisdom of the "Orientalist" school is that the lack of civil society in the Arab world is due to the absence, or at best the irremediable weakness, of civil society's basic elements. For the prevailing trend in that school, Islam has been the primary reason for this because of what is considered to be its "despotic" nature, best illustrated by Islam not knowing any separation of the spiritual and the temporal and by its only acknowledging divine sovereignty, which is believed to inhibit the emergence of any autonomous public sphere.[10] Furthermore, Islam impeded the formation of a civil society that could have resisted despotism for, in the words of Bernard Lewis:

> Islamic law knows no corporate legal persons; Islamic history shows no councils or communes, no synods or parliaments, nor any other kind of elective or representative assembly. It is interesting that the jurists never accepted the principle of majority decision. There was no point, since the need for a procedure of corporate collective decision never arose. In heaven there was one God, and one alone; on earth there was no court but a single judge, no state but a single ruler.[11]

The fact that mainstream Sunni political thought in classical Islam upheld the doctrine that when the unity of the community (*umma*) was in danger, and in the potential face of anarchy, submission ought to be given to the ruler even if an evil-doer, led another leading author of the Orientalist school, Elie Kedourie, to assert that in Islam:

> There can be no question of checks and balances, of division of power, of popular sovereignty, of elections of representative assemblies. … There could be no question of representative bodies being set up to carry on a dialogue between ruler and subject; neither could there be institutions of local self-government in town or countryside; nor could craft or professional associations flourish unhindered, since they would always be suspected of limiting the sway of the government over its subjects.[12]

Diametrically opposed to the "Orientalist" theories is the apologetic discourse of some Muslim scholars for whom Islam has been, from its very beginnings, no less than an ideal home for civil society and democratic governance. Very representative of this trend is Fahmi Huwaydi, who writes: "The Islamic society was a self-organized society centuries long before the emergence of the idea of civil society, which is much yearned for nowadays by certain people."[13] Along that same line

of thought, Ahmad Shukr al-Sabihi affirms that "The historical experience of the prophet's era constitutes the first experiment of civil contract that history has witnessed and which preceded Rousseau's theory of 'Social Contract.'"[14]

What the Orientalists and the apologists share in common is their "essentialistic" approach. In fact, neither the distorting Western lenses of the former nor the apriorism(s) of the latter do any justice to either Islam or Arab history. More particularly, they do not help us ascertain whether a civil society has really existed or not. In the event it did, they do not help us appreciate the roles it played, or determine how it evolved.

Islam is far from being a monolith and having a fixed culture. It is not inherently opposed to democratic norms although its political experience cannot be said to have always been supportive of civil society. As a matter of fact, both participatory, based on *shura*, and authoritarian trends have existed within Islamic political culture. Although the latter, which had triumphed in classical Islam, went in the view of al-Ash'ari so far as to justify submission to even the evil ruler if needed to avoid chaos, it is worthwhile noting here that the "civil" (as distinguished from "civic") rights of indi-

viduals continued to be respected, even towards the State itself, which acquired no privilege with respect to contracts.[15]

The value Islam attached to the unity of the *umma*[16] and its cohesiveness did not prevent—although it might have hindered at times—the formation, especially in urban centers,[17] of social organizations such as the guilds (*asnaf*) and the rights and privileges they acquired,[18] and institutions such as the charitable trusts (*awqaf*) and the prominent role they played in providing educational and social services.[19] In fact, both enjoyed a remarkable degree of autonomy from the central government. The same autonomy was also given to Sufi brotherhoods and their internal organization[20] and to religious minorities, namely, Christians and Jews, whose "special" status came at a later stage to be institutionalized in the *millet* system.[21] In addition, one should mention here that in big cities such as Cairo, Damascus or Tunis, the '*ulama*' or legal-religious scholars often played the role of intermediaries between state and society, and no less often that of spokesmen for the grievances of the populace as well.[22]

This is not to suggest that classical Islam has known a civil society corresponding to that which emerged

in Europe. Nonetheless, it indicates that the necessary conditions for the formation of civil society were not totally absent from Islamic societies. In fact, the existence of such elements formed a potential which civil society could build upon. In a way, they were moorings for, if not precursors of, civil society.

The development in Islamdom of civil society in its modern sense can be traced to that period of radical changes and widespread modernization efforts that the Ottoman empire had witnessed, beginning in the 18th century, as part of its efforts to face the challenges posed by its new encounter with the West. Clubs, societies and associations of all sorts were mushrooming in Istanbul and the other major urban centers of the Ottoman empire in its late years.[23] The Arab states that were formed in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman empire inherited part of that legacy. In many regions of the Arab world, this associational life, which had started developing at the turn of the century, managed to survive the oppressive methods of decades of direct or indirect Western colonial rule to which they were later subjected.[24]

Paradoxically, in the first decades that followed independence, the expansion of civil society was checked

across the Arab world. Radical military regimes were established in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, and Libya. All of them followed a pattern of one-party-rule. Civil society organizations were either banned or had to adapt as government-tolerated, if not government-sponsored, organizations. Only a strong state, it was then argued, could mobilize all national energies to face Israel and realize the aspirations of Arab unity.[25] Presumably, only such a strong state could also accelerate economic growth and achieve independent development and social justice. To pursue such goals, citizens of these radical regimes were asked not only to relinquish their political rights to participation, but also to accept the coercive methods of their governments. A mixture of populist ideology and repressive institutions worked hand in hand to insure the legitimization of such states and the demobilization of their societies.[26]

In the other parts of the Arab world, where "traditional" politics managed to survive the radical sway of the fifties and sixties, the destiny of civil society had not been much better. In fact, the radical states' trade-off of political rights for promises of social justice and "national dignity" was paralleled in the rentier oil states of the Gulf by another trade-off, that of participatory

demands for promises of material wealth.[27] As long as these states could continue to afford a "no taxation" policy, they believed that they could continue with "no representation" as well. Power, here also, was being concentrated in an expanding state due to the increasing flow of oil revenues; but social organizations and opposition groups were generally bought off rather than repressed as in the radical regimes.[28]

Two turning point events in the contemporary history of the Middle East would, however, allow civil societies to re-emerge and regain strength, for they compelled most Arab states to consider change and start opening up their regimes—although not to the degree often publicized. The first of these events was the impact on the radical governments of the 1967 Arab defeat by Israel. Not only were their "nationalist" strategies now questioned, their failure to deliver on their promises of development and social justice were attacked as well. The second event was the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991, which threatened the oil monarchies in their legitimacy while it also exposed for all to see the adventurism and oppressive nature of the Iraqi regime.[29]

Several other factors have led to the revitalization of

civil society in the Arab world during the past three decades. The most important among them are the following:

1. Massive urbanization leading both to growth in the socio-economic needs of the population and to the weakening of primordial ties. What is important to note here is that this phenomenon is continuing at a time when many Arab states are no longer capable of providing such services as housing, better quality health, and education, let alone job opportunities.[30]

2. The increasing number of university graduates, especially those holding European and American degrees, along with the general expansion of education. The subsequent rise of the levels of expectation and ambition of the young is motivating them to organize in order to better articulate their demands. This also explains the developing attention to issues of human rights and women among Arab youth.[31]

3. The recent trend of international development agencies (such as the World Bank, UNDP, and others), the European Union, and numbers of bilateral donors to extend grants and loans no longer to national governments only, but directly to "vulnerable" social groups (e.g., women, disabled,

youth), to associations carrying out projects related to "human" or "sustainable" development, such as environment protection and rural development, and to local governments (e.g., regional councils, municipalities). As a matter of fact, the role of NGOs in development has become a key feature of the "neo-liberal" approach to socio-economic problems based on private sector initiatives, especially with an increasing trend towards privatization throughout the Arab world.[32]

4. The political liberalization that took place during the past two decades, even though it was initiated from above and often pursuant to the advice given to Arab rulers by their Western allies. When most Arab leaders promote reforms, it is not because they have come to accept the possibility of having to relinquish power one day, but rather because "they seek to keep it," as Richard Norton so pertinently puts it.[33] However, whatever the limitations of such reforms so far, they did open up certain outlets for the free expression of ideas, and permitted a large number of interest groups to form NGOs and of social groups to start organizing, be it in the form of clubs, syndicates or associations.

5. The rapidity with which new technologies such as the internet and satellite television are gaining ground in the Arab world is circumventing state control over information and further exposing the people of the region to foreign experiments of change and dissent, whether successful or not. This is also contributing to their higher levels of consciousness and to greater aspirations.[34]

Examples of the revitalization of civil society in the Arab world are numerous.[35] They range from the thousands of NGOs formed in Egypt since the early days of liberalization in the seventies, to the very recent and difficult beginnings of "Cultural Clubs" in Damascus; to the creation in Kuwait of women *diwaniyya*s—a form of gathering traditionally restricted to men; to "autonomous" organizations still being formed in Tunisia, notwithstanding the curtailment of freedom of association; and to the Jordanian professional associations of lawyers, doctors, engineers, writers, and journalists, which are increasing their role as pressure groups and showing a remarkable capability to articulate political positions and demands beyond their immediate corporate concerns. We must also recognize Bahrain's remarkable associational life and Lebanon's civil society, whose

vitality remains outstanding in the Arab world in spite of that country's long ordeal of conflicts and wars, domestic and regional.

These are but a few relevant examples. Others could easily be added. It seems, however, more useful here to underline the specific problems one faces in the Arab world when it comes to which elements should be considered as part of civil society and which ought to be excluded. The most problematic of these elements are the following:

1. Are Islamist groups part or not part of civil society? Advocates for their inclusion will emphasize how "effective" they have been in responding to the socio-economic needs of the people, while opponents will no less rightly point to the advocacy of violence by many such groups, as in Algeria, or to their intolerance toward those who hold different ideas or beliefs, recalling to that effect that the notion of "civil society" also implies respect for pluralism and for freedom of speech. The intolerance of Islamist groups is best illustrated in the 1995 apostasy campaign launched in Egypt against Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd for his "liberal" interpretations of the Qur'an.

2. Should all NGOs be considered part of civil society? Local activists and international experts alike realize, as Sheila Carapico puts it, that "non-governmental" is often "a matter of degree and that classifying something as an NGO can contain an element of reification. Recognizing that the regimes may try to co-opt donor assistance to NGOs by creating NGOs, and that donor assistance itself may prompt the formation of institutions specifically to secure external funding, they have coined expressions like GO-NGO (government-organized NGO), DO-NGO (donor-organized NGO) and quasi-NGO (pronounced 'quengo')."[36]

3. What about CBOs (community-based organizations)? To what extent are they not the expression of traditional kinship among family or tribe (*asabiyya*) but in modern associational dress? In other words, should social organizations based on primordial ties such as family, clan, tribe or sect be considered as part of civil society?[37]

The best way to answer these questions is, in our opinion, to call for a case-by-case approach and to avoid general answers.

To conclude, a note of realism seems in order. It is true that Arab states are facing problems of stagnant economies and crises of legitimacy and governance, but states in the Arab world are not on the verge of collapse; they are still the most powerful—though no longer the sole—actors. At the same time, primordial ties are weakening, although this need not lead us to think that they are necessarily being replaced by voluntary associations. Does this mean that we cannot be optimistic about the prospects for civil society in the Arab world? No, it does not, for well-founded optimism is not wishful thinking. Optimism always needs to be tempered.

Endnotes

[1] Dr. Nawaf Salam is an attorney and a lecturer at the American University of Beirut. He holds an LL.M from Harvard Law School and a *Doctorat d'Etat* from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques of Paris. His recent publications include *Ab'ad min al-Ta'if* (Beirut 1997), and *La Condition Libanaise. Communautés, Citoyen, Etat* (Beirut 1998). This paper is based on the public lecture he delivered at the 2001 Harvard Law School Worldwide Alumni Congress in Paris.

[2] See Andrew Arato, "Civil Society Against the State: Poland, 1980-1981," in *Thelas* 47 (1981), pp. 23-47.

[3] See especially, Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge 1992; Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*, London 1994; John A. Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*, Cambridge 1995; John Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*, London 1988; Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, New York 1992; Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," in *Government and Opposition* 26 (1991); and Michael Walzer (ed.), *Toward a Global Civil Society*, Oxford 1995.

[4] For Asia, see Léon Vandermeersch, *La Société civile face à l'Etat dans les traditions chinoise, japonaise, coréenne et vietnamienne*, Paris 1994; for Latin America, see Alfred Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bring-ing the State Back In*, New York 1985; for Africa, Michael Bratton, "Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa," in *World Politics* 41 (1989), pp. 404-30; and Célestin Monga, *Anthropologie de la colère: société civile et démocratie en Afrique noire*, Paris 1995; and for the Middle East, see especially Augustus Richard Norton (ed.), *Civil Society in the Middle East*, 2 vols., Leiden 1995, 1996; Iliya Harik, "Rethinking Civil Society: Pluralism in the Arab World," in *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1994), pp. 43-56; and in Arabic, Dar Ibn Khaldun, *al-Mujtama' al-madani wa 'l-tahawwul al-dimuqrati fi 'l-watan al-'arabi*, Cairo 1992; Markaz dirasat al-wahda al-'arabiyya (Buhuth wa-munaqashat al-nadwa al-fikriyya al-lati nazzamaha), *Al-Mujtama' al-madani fi 'l-watan al-'arabi wa-dawruhu fi tahqiq al-dimuqratiyya*, Beirut 1992; Ahmad Shukr al-Subayhi, *Mustaqbal al-mujtama'*

al-madani fi 'l-watan al-'arabi, Beirut 2000; Azmi Bishara, *Al-Mujtama' al-madani: dirasat naqdiyya*, Beirut 1998.

5 Salvador Giner, "Civil Society and its Future," in John A. Hall (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 301.

6 Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society," in *Journal of Democracy*, 7/3 (1996), p. 42.

7 For a historical analysis of the theoretical and political evolution of the concept of civil society, see John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea*, New York 1999.

8 For Hegel, see G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, Oxford 1967; and Z.A. Pelczynski (ed.), *The State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Cambridge 1984. For Locke, see his *Two Treaties of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, New York 1988; and Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (above, n. 3). For Gramsci and Habermas, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Smith, London 1971; Norberto Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Conception of Civil Society," in Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, London 1979, pp. 21-47; Jürgen Habermas, *The*

Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Cambridge 1989; and Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, Cambridge 1993.

9 Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society. Toward Democratic Consolidation," in *Journal of Democracy* 5/3 (July 1994), p. 5.

10 For a critical analysis of the "Orientalist" school thesis on civil society in the Arab world, see the excellent essay by Yahia Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," in *Middle East Report*, no. 183 (July-August 1993); also see Patricia Springborg, *Western Republicanism and the Oriental Prince*, Austin 1992; Bryan Turner, "Orientalism and the Problem of Civil Society in Islam," in Asaf Hussein, Robert Olson, and Jamil Qureshi (eds.), *Orientalism, Islam and Islamists*, Brattleboro 1984.

11 Bernard Lewis, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, New York 1994, pp. 45-46.

12 Elie Kedourie, *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*, London 1994, pp. 7-8.

13 Fahmi Huwaydi, "Al-Islam wa 'l-dimuqratiyya," in *Al-Mustaqbal al-'arabi*, no. 166 (December 1992), p. 11.

14 Ahmad Shukr al-Subayhi, *Mustaqbal al-mujtama' al-madani* (above, n. 4), p. 49.

[15] For further discussion of the issue, see Nawaf Salam, "The Emergence of Citizenship in Islamdom," in *Arab Law Quarterly* 12 (1997), pp. 125-47.

[16] For this term, see Louis Massignon, "L'Umma et ses synonymes," in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* (1946), pp. 151-57; C.A.O. von Nieuwenhuijze, "The Ummah, an Analytical Approach," in *Studia Islamica* 10 (1952), pp. 5-22; and Ridwan al-Sayyid, *al-Umma wa 'l-jama'at wa 'l-sultat*, Beirut 1984, pp. 17-87.

[17] For urban life and social structures, see Antoine Abdelnour, *Introduction à l'histoire urbaine de la Syrie ottomane, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle*, Beirut 1982; Dominique Chevallier (ed.), *L'Espace social de la ville arabe*, Paris 1979; A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern (eds.), *The Islamic City*, Oxford 1970; and André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Damascus 1972. For urban movements, particularly, see Claude Cahen, "Mouvements populaires et autonomisme urbain dans l'Asie musulmane du moyen-âge," in *Arabica*, (1958), pp. 225-50, (1959), pp. 25-26, 233-65.

[18] On the organization and role of guilds in Islamic societies, see Gabriel Baer, "Guilds in Middle Eastern History," in M.A. Cook (ed.), *Studies in the*

Economic History of the Middle East, Oxford 1970, pp. 11-30; Claude Cahen, "Y a-t-il eu des corporations professionnelles dans le monde musulman classique?," in Hourani and Stern (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 51-63; Louis Massignon, "Les corps de métiers et la cité islamique," in idem, *Opera Minora*, vol. 1, Paris 1969, pp. 369-84; and Ridwan al-Sayyid, "Al-jama'at al-madiniyyat fi 'l-ijtima' al-islami: al-asnaf," in idem, *Mafahim al-jama'at fi 'l-Islam*, Beirut 1993, pp. 69-97.

[19] See the articles "Wakf" in H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (eds.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden 1974, and in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. XI, Leiden 2002; Antoine Abdelnour, *Etudes sur deux actes de waqfs du XVIe et du XVIIe siècle des wilayets de Damas et de Sayda*, doct. thesis, University of Paris-Sorbonne, 1976, unpubl.; and Claude Cahen, "Reflexions sur le waqf ancien," in *Studia Islamica* 14 (1981), pp. 31-56.

[20] On Sufism and Sufi movements in Islam, see A.J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam*, New York 1950; G.C. Anawati and L. Gardet, *Mystique musulmane*, Paris 1961; R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge 1971; A.M.

Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill 1975.

[21] See Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols., New York 1982; and Claude Cahen, "L'Islam et les minorités confessionnelles au cours de l'histoire," in *La Table Ronde* 126 (June 1958), pp. 61-72.

[22] For a general overview, see Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions since 1500*, Berkeley 1972, pp. 15-272; and for the role of 'ulama's as social intermediaries, see, for example, Farouk Mardam-Bey, "Tensions sociales et réalités urbaines à Damas au XVIIIe siècle," in Abdelwahab Bouhdiba and Dominique Chevallier, *La Ville arabe dans l'Islam*, Paris 1982, pp. 117-32.

[23] For the Ottoman empire and the West, see Roderic H. Davidson, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923. The Impact of the West*, London 1990; H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol. 1, London 1957; William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds.), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East*, Chicago 1968; and Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 2,

Reform, Revolution and Republic, Cambridge 1977.

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[24] See, in particular, Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*, Princeton 1987.

[25] See Hanna Batatu, *The Egyptian, Syrian, and Iraqi Revolutions*, Inaugural Lecture of the Shaykh Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah Chair in Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 1984; idem, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers*, Princeton 1978; idem, *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of its Lesser Rural Notables, and their Politics*, Princeton 1999; George H. Haddad, *Revolutions and Military Rule in the Middle East*, New York 1973, vol. 2, part

1, and vol. 3; Derek Hopwood, *Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1990*, London 1991; Elizabeth Picard, "Arab Military in Politics: From Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State," in Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, Berkeley 1990, pp. 189-219, repr. in Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson (eds.), *The Modern Middle East : A Reader*, Berkeley 1993, pp. 551-78.

[26] Picard notes how under such regimes the military "became the brokers (*wusata*') between the State and the people for any kind of public transaction, thus eradicating the civilian society they had wanted to shape," *op.cit.*, p. 568. No less pertinently, she also observes how "rather than developing the state sector" the role of officers "who hold civilian functions, lies in allocating the benefits of government operations. Their purpose is to enlist politically devoted clients from the state bureaucracy, who benefit from the patronage process in which goods and services are traded for loyalty and obedience," *op.cit.*, p. 572.

[27] For a general view, see Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds.), *The Rentier State,* vol. 2, *Nation, State and Integration in the Arab World,* London 1987; Jill Crystal, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf. Rulers*

and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar, Cambridge 1995; Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, *Society and State in the Gulf and Arab Peninsula: A Different Perspective*, London 1990.

[28] On these issues, and more generally for a comparison of the relationship between political power and social actors in "radical" and "rentier" states, see the excellent essay by Jill Crystal, "Authoritarianism and its Adversaries in the Arab World," in *World Politics* 46 (1994), pp. 262-89.

[29] Generally, see Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Civil Society and Prospects of Democratization in the Arab World," in A.R. Norton, *Civil Society* (above, n. 4), vol. 1. pp. 27-54; and Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble (eds.), *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, 2 vols., Boulder, Col. 1995, 1998.

[30] See Gerald H. Blake and Richard I. Lawless (eds.), *The Changing Middle Eastern City*, London 1980; L. Carl Brown, *From Madina to Metropolis: Heritage and Change in the Near Eastern City*, Princeton 1973; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Population Spatial Distribution*, Amman 1993; and *Maghreb-Machrek* 81 (July-September 1978): *L'Urbanisation au moyen-orient arabe*.

[31] See Mahmoud Hussein, *Versant sud de la liberté*, Paris 1989, pp. 62, 130-31.

[32] See Sheila Carapico, "NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs: Making Sense of Non-Governmental Organizations," in *Middle East Report* 214 (2000), pp. 12-15.

[33] A.R. Norton, "Introduction," in idem, *Civil Society* (above, n. 4), p. 3.

[34] In fact, "even without the penetration of the electronic media or the fax machine, hundreds of thousands of labor migrants, moving back and forth across the region, carry powerful images of change and dissent". Norton, *op.cit.*, pp. 4-5.

[35] See Norton, *op.cit.*, vols. 1 and 2.

[36] Sheila Carapico, "NGOs, INGOs" (above, n. 32), p. 14. For a critical assessment of the role of Islamic NGOs in Palestine, see Sara Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine," in *Middle East Report* 214 (2000), pp. 24-26.

[37] The question may become one of capital importance, e.g., in the case of Lebanon.